

Gallatin Gateway's Community Vision and Guiding Principles

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Gallatin Gateway has seen slow but steady change over the past 100 years, from the platting of the original town of Salesville, to the development of numerous subdivisions in the area, to the operation of several local businesses and the development and use of property ongoing today. As residents of Gallatin Gateway discuss these changes, the questions that have arisen during this planning process are:

- How does the community grow without eroding many of the values attracting people to the area?
- How do we ensure that new uses are compatible with existing uses?
- How do we meet the growing demand for public facilities?
- How do we protect environmental quality and the rural landscape?
- How do we balance the right of individuals to use their property with the responsibility to the community that comes with new development?

In this changing landscape, these questions are what planning is all about. The conversation is ongoing and will evolve over time. Gallatin Gateway's answers begin below, with the community vision and the Guiding Principles.

2.1 Gallatin Gateway's Vision for the Future

2.2 Guiding Principles

2.1 Vision for the Future

Gallatin Gateway recognizes it will continue to grow and change over the next several years. The following statements begin to discuss how, as it develops, Gallatin Gateway will continue to enjoy its rural, small town atmosphere and continue to be a place its residents want to call home:

- **Downtown Gateway** will explore opportunities to invest in new facilities, including a water and sewer district, roads, schools, parks, and trails as necessary, to ensure downtown Gateway grows in a healthy and moderate manner;
- **Rural Gateway** will sustain its rural, working, and agricultural

landscapes by exploring both regulatory and non-regulatory tools to protect its open spaces, wildlife habitat, water quality, natural resources, and property values;

- Gallatin Gateway, Gallatin County, and the Montana Department of Transportation will cooperate to ensure that **Highway 191** receives necessary improvements to safely handle increasingly higher traffic loads and to improve the aesthetic character of the corridor;
- Gallatin Gateway will continue to respect **private property rights** by ensuring that new uses do not degrade the value of existing landowners, and by ensuring that any new regulations are flexible and not overly burdensome;

Residents of Gallatin Gateway believe **responsibility** comes with new development. New development should be consistent with the custom, culture, and historic pattern of development of the community.

Policy 2.2 Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles have been used to guide specific policy direction in each of the three geographic areas of the planning jurisdiction.

Rural Lifestyle. Repeatedly, residents have stressed that Gallatin Gateway is a unique place. The quality of life, the night sky, access to recreational areas, and the sense of community and neighborliness of people were continually mentioned as principle values. Residents stressed that new development, whether residential, commercial, or industrial, should be appropriate to the area and its neighbors.

Compatibility between existing residential and new commercial. Many residents expressed concern with the compatibility of residential, commercial, and industrial use. Generally, residents feel that Gallatin Gateway should primarily be residential and agricultural in the rural parts of the planning area, with most of the commercial development limited to the downtown core, including the area between Gooch Hill Road and Cottonwood Road along Highway 191.

Property Rights Protection. Basic property rights protection is always in the background (if not the forefront) of every discussion regarding planning. Discussion showed that property rights is a two-sided coin: the right to use property goes hand in hand with responsibility to your neighbors and your community.

Pride in the Gallatin Gateway School. According to recent surveys, there is strong community support for the school, including the idea that the school helps provide an identity for the community and will need to be supported in the future.

A Healthy, Vibrant Downtown. Many residents expressed a desire for a safe, walkable, and vibrant town center with adequate services for residents, including appropriate commercial development, a functioning school, a volunteer-constructed community center, central water and sewer, and parks and trails.

Protected Natural Resources. Elements such as clean water, clean air, wildlife, and the surrounding open space and agricultural lands are crucial to maintaining the quality of life of the community.

Sufficient Infrastructure, Including Central Sewer and Water for Downtown Gallatin Gateway. As Gateway grows, sufficient infrastructure should be in place, including central sewer and water, a strong, well-funded school, and a fire department which can provide efficient and safe services.

A dominant issue has been the need for central sewer and water for downtown Gateway and the protection of groundwater in the area. With this discussion, however, two primary cautions have emerged regarding central water and sewer: the presence of infrastructure could potentially lead to greater density than was desired, and the fear that a heavy financial burden could be imposed on residents who may not have an immediate need for hookup to a central system. Any exploration of central water and sewer will need to take these questions into account.

Protected Viewsheds Through Control of Signage and Billboards. All participation efforts showed that control of new signs and billboards, primarily along Highway 191, was a priority.

Better Transportation. Good, safe, and efficient traffic safety on Highway 191 is critical to the quality of life of the area, as is traffic and pedestrian safety on Mill Street in Downtown Gateway. Additionally, many residents expressed a desire to see paths and trails incorporated into the area.

Protected Open Spaces and Agricultural Landscapes. Open spaces and healthy agricultural landscapes are critical to maintaining the rural nature of the area.

Implementation and Results. Many residents expressed a desire to

have a successful and meaningful planning process, resulting in a thoughtful community plan ensuring the appropriateness of new development in the area. In addition, residents have expressed a willingness to explore zoning, central water and sewer, and other tools to implement the plan.